Will Electronic Computers Restore GP to Preeminence?

The increased use of electronic computers in the practice of medicine might possibly return the general practitioner to his former preeminence, according to an editorial in the July 22 *Journal of American Medical Association.*

Discussing the role of the computer in medicine, the Journal said:

"It may be expected that computers will enter into almost all the intellectual activities of medicine except those which require imagination or those which by their nature require the personal relationship of doctor to patient."

Computers might be used to evaluate information on the patient's history collected by the physician, the editorial said. The machine also could deduce the diagnosis from the presence or absence of a list of symptoms; decide which laboratory tests should be performed, and calculate the best choice of treatment based on a collection of accurate statistical information, it said.

In performing these tasks, the editorial continued, the computer has the advantage of recalling accurately each time the correct statistics upon which to base its conclusion and its conclusion will not be biased by irrelevant factors.

Regarding the effect of these developments on the practice of medicine, the editorial said:

"Is it possible that the training of large numbers of expert diagnosticians may be unnecessary in the future and that the general practitioner, trained to collect information accurately from his patient and to administer certain forms of treatment expertly, may, with the help of a computer (as accessible as his telephone), handle the bulk of medical practice once again?

"The medical student of the future may not be burdened with learning the great mass of statistical information concerning the likelihood of finding a particular symptom in a particular disease, as he now is in his years of clinical training. Instead, emphasis may be placed upon accurate data collection, effective management of the patient's psychological and emotional needs and administration of particular forms of treatment."

CORRELATION OF INSULIN REQUIREMENTS WITH THE CONCENTRATION OF INSULIN-BINDING ANTIBODY IN TWO CASES OF INSULIN RESISTANCE—J. H. Morse. J. Clin. Endocr.—Vol. 21:533 (May) 1961.

A correlation between the concentration of insulin-binding antibody and the degree of insulin resistance was demonstrated in two patients with insulin-resistant diabetes. Both patients had high antibody titers during the acute phase of insulin resistance. The titers decreased concomitantly with a decrease in the insulin requirement. These findings suggest that in some cases insulin-binding antibodies may account for insulin resistance.